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ABSTRACT

It is time to stop blaming the rise in serious student misbehavior on families, peers, teachers, school systems and society, and to begin to hold students responsible for their own actions. To compare the personal characteristics of disruptive and "normal" students, teachers in a small high school identified 69 inhibitors (disruptive students) and 92 facilitators (well-behaved students) who subsequently completed the Intellectual Achievement Responsibility Questionnaire, the Rotter Internal-External Control Scale, the Motivation Inventory and the Crime Prevention Attitude Inventory. Compared to inhibitors, facilitators were more internal, more strongly motivated by needs higher on the Maslow hierarchy, and more law-and-order oriented with respect to crime prevention. Results were discussed in terms of their salience for classroom teachers and the probable effects of attribution retraining upon inhibitors. (Author)

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# LOCUS OF CONTROL, MOTIVES AND CRIME PREVENTION ATTITUDES OF CLASSROOM FACILITATORS AND INHIBITORS

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Duke (1980) cites several recent reports that student misbehavior, ranging from truancy and disrespect to violence and vandalism, are still on the rise in the public schools. In an earlier review (Duke, 1978), he insisted that the time had come to stop blaming this phenomenon on the deviants' families, peer groups, teachers, school systems and society, and to begin to hold students responsible for their own actions.

One way of investigating the merit of this suggestion is to contrast some personal characteristics of disruptive students with those of students who seem well adjusted to life in the schools. In an unpublished doctoral study of a small, urban high school, Duffy (1971) contrasted the attitudes and behaviors of 20 faculty-identified problem students with those of an equal stratified random sample of all other students. The data revealed that problem students were more often involved in reckless and inappropriate behaviors, had greater needs for attention and recognition, and preferred teachers whom they felt were concerned and interested in them.

Srivastava (1972) also used teachers to identify 30 disciplined and 30 indisciplined students from three Hindu high schools. The Hindi version of Cattell's High School Personality Questionnaire (1965) was administered to both groups. The results showed the indisciplined students to be significantly more excitable, impatient, demanding and overactive, assertive, independent, aggressive, stubborn and dominant, and tense. Disciplined students were found to be more intelligent, better abstract thinkers, more persevering, rulebound, reflective, internally restrained and willing to act.

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In a similar study (Gnagey, 1979), all teachers of a small high school identified 59 inhibitors (disruptive students) and 86 facilitators (well-behaved students) who subsequently completed the Quality of School Life instrument (Epstein and McPartland, 1976, 1977), the Motivation Inventory (Gnagey, 1979, p. 35) and the Inventory of Values (Gnagey, 1979, p. 135). Facilitators perceived school life as significantly more satisfying, their classes as more interesting, and their teachers as more effective than did inhibitors. Male inhibitors were significantly more driven by their safety needs than male facilitators. When their composite achievement test scores were compared, facilitators appeared to have significantly more academic ability than inhibitors.

Responding more directly to Duke's admonition that students should be held responsible for their own actions, this study set out to determine if facilitators and inhibitors differ in their beliefs about their control over their own lives. In addition, we wished to compare their motive hierarchies and their attitudes toward crime prevention.

## Procedure

### Inhibitors and Facilitators

All teachers of a small (550-student) high school were asked to help identify classroom facilitators and inhibitors. Facilitators were defined as "students whose classroom conduct usually promotes the optimum learning of their classmates. They are constructive and cooperative and almost never disrupt the class."

Inhibitors were defined as students whose classroom conduct "often spoils the learning climate for their classmates. They are relatively destructive, uncooperative and often disrupt the class."

The teachers were asked to rate every pupil in each of their classes on the five-point scale below.

5 = usually facilitates learning
4 = often facilitates learning
3 = doesn't clearly inhibit or facilitate learning
2 = often inhibits learning
1 = usually inhibits learning

Each teacher then supplied lists of students rated in the highest one-fourth (facilitators) and in the lowest one-fourth (inhibitors) of each class.

Students who did not appear on both lists and who had been nominated by two or more teachers were chosen as subjects for the experiment. Sixty-nine inhibitors (25 females and 44 males) and ninety-two facilitators (45 females and 47 males) were identified (see Table 1).

About a week after the two lists were finalized, all inhibitors and facilitators completed the Intellectual Achievement Responsibility Questionnaire (Crandall, Katovsky and Crandall, 1965), the Rotter Internal-External Control Scale (Rotter, 1966), a new revision of the Motivation Inventory (Gnagey, 1979) and the Crime Prevention Attitude Inventory (Gnagey and McAdam, 1978).

Locus of Control

Attribution theory (Weiner, 1972, 1974; Weiner et al., 1971) suggests that the beliefs people hold about the causes of their successes and failures may have a potent influence on their achievement-related behavior. When they cite their own ability and efforts as causes for their successes and failures, their locus of control is said to be internal. When luck or the nature of the circumstances are blamed, the locus of control is termed external (Rotter, 1966). It has been shown that high achievers tend to be more internal than low achievers (Bar-Tal and Frieze, 1977). We predicted that, compared to inhibitors, facilitators would be more internal since, by definition, they exhibit more learning-appropriate behavior.

The Intellectual Achievement Responsibility Questionnaire (Crandall et al., 1965) is made up of 34 forced-choice items, each composed of a stem followed by two alternatives. The modified directions used in this study follow.

> "In each of the items below, put a plus mark (+) in the blank next to the answer you think is right. Be sure to mark only one answer for each item."

Students with an internal locus of control choose items such as, "If a teacher passes you to the next grade, it would probably be because of the work you did," or "When you have trouble understanding something in school, it is usually because you didn't listen carefully."

Students with an external locus of control choose alternatives such as, "If a teacher passes you on to the next grade, it would probably be because she liked you," or "When you have trouble understanding something in school, it is usually because the teacher didn't explain it clearly."

Because some items deal with successes (I+) and some with failures (I-), two subscores can be computed in addition to the total score. The higher the score, the more internal is the student's locus of control.

The test was given twice to 70 ninth graders with a two-month interval. The reliability coefficient between the two sets of scores was .69 for the total score (I), .47 for success attribution (I+), and .69 for failure attribution (I-).

The Rotter Internal-External Control Scale (Rotter, 1966) consists of 29 pairs of statements, six of which are fillers. The modified directions used in this study follow.

> "In each of the items below, put a plus mark (+) in each blank next to the answer you think is right. Be sure to mark only one answer for each item."

Statements such as, "Many of the unhappy things in people's lives are partly due to bad luck," and "It is hard to know whether or not a person really likes you" are chosen by students who have an external locus of control.

Statements such as "People's misfortunes result from the mistakes they make," and "How many friends you have depends upon how nice a person you are," are chosen by students who have an internal locus of control. The higher the I-E score, the more external a student's locus of control.

Satisfactory concurrent and construct validity has been established and the Kuder-Richardson coefficient of internal consistency was found to be .69 for 1000 tenth, eleventh and twelfth graders (Rotter, 1966, p. 13).

Motive Hierarchies

Abraham Maslow (1970) asserts that human needs are hierarchical and must usually be satisfied in the following order: physiological (P), safety (S), love and belonging (L), self-esteem (E), knowledge (K) and self-actualization (SA). According to his theory, self-actualized persons are the best adjusted, having their lower needs satisfied and being motivated to become, in actuality, what they are potentially.

On the surface, facilitators seem better adjusted to school and show fewer overt signs of frustration than inhibitors. We, therefore, hypothesized that facilitators would be more influenced by their esteem, knowledge and self-actualization needs than would inhibitors. For the same reasons, we expected inhibitors to be more influenced by their physiological, safety and love and belonging needs than their facilitator counterparts.

The Motivation Inventory is based on Maslow's model of human motivation. The 30-item instrument had been developed in a previous study (Gnagey, 1978) from six phrases describing activities thought to be closely related to each of Maslow's need categories. It has recently been revised to expand the possible range of scores. The directions for this forced-choice instrument follow.

> "Below are 15 pairs of activities. Circle the number of the one in each case which presently demands more of your attention. Then estimate how much more by putting a number in the blank at the

left of the circled item. Use the following scale: 3 = from 51% to 100% more; 2 = from 25% to 50% more; 1 = from 1% to 25% more.

A single statement represents each of the five motives and is paired at random with every other statement. The six statements appear below.

Physiological: Taking care of my own physical needs: food, clothing, shelter, etc.
Safety: Keeping safe and secure so that no one can hurt me.
Love and Belonging: Finding and keeping close friends who will think a lot of me.
Self-esteem: Becoming a good person who is looked up to by others.
Knowledge: Finding out about new things. Satisfying my curiosity.
Self-actualization: Pursuing hobbies that are fulfilling to me.

The score for any motive is the sum of the ratings given the item every time it was chosen. The scores range from 0-15 for each. The higher the score, the more potent the influence of the need on a student's behavior. The inventory was administered twice to a heterogeneous sample of 43 high school students who were not subjects in the study. The two administrations were one week apart. Product moment correlation coefficients between the two sets of scores were computed for each motive category. Coefficients of reliability for the six motives ranged from .62 to .79, averaging .67.

Attitudes Toward Crime

Since, by definition, facilitators are more law abiding in the school setting, we predicted that they would be more law-and-order oriented with respect to crimes committed outside the school.

The Crime Prevention Attitude Inventory (Gnagey and McAdam, 1978) is composed of 24 statements about criminals, crimes, punishment and reporting crimes. The directions follow.

"Below are 24 statements about crimes, criminals and crime prevention. Show how you feel about each statement by writing a number in the blank to its left. Use the following scale: 5 = I strongly agree, 4 = I agree, 3 = I can't decide, 2 = I disagree, 1 = I strongly disagree."

Students who believe in strict law and order agree with items such as, "If a shoplifter is convicted, he should be severely punished." and disagree with

items such as, "It's okay for a poor person to shoplift." The higher the score a student makes, the more law-and-order oriented he/she appears.

The CPAI was administered twice to a heterogeneous sample of 55 high school students not in the study. There was a one-week interval between administrations. The reliability coefficient between the two sets of scores was .79.

Achievement Scores

In an earlier study (Gnagey, 1979), facilitators were found to have a mean percentile rank on the composite score of the SRA National Educational Development battery (Science Research Associates, 1964) nearly double that of facilitators. In order to see if this finding could be replicated, we made a similar comparison in the present study. In addition, we compared the two groups on the English, mathematics and word usage subscores of the test.

## Results

As we predicted, both male and female facilitators had significantly higher total IAR scores (were more internal) than their inhibitor counterparts (see Tables 2 and 3). While this also held true for both success (I+) and failure (I-) attribution subscores for male subjects, it was true only for the success subscore in females.

While the I-E scores for female facilitators did not differ from those of female inhibitors, male inhibitors scored significantly higher (were more external) than their facilitator counterparts (see Tables 2 and 3).

As was predicted, compared to female facilitators, female inhibitors scored significantly higher on Maslow's P, S, and L (lower) needs and significantly lower on SA and C (higher) needs (see Tables 2 and 3). Compared to male facilitators, male inhibitors scored significantly higher on the P

and S (lower) needs but did not differ in their SA and C (higher) need scores (see Tables 2 and 3).

In accordance with our predictions, both female and male facilitators scored significantly higher on the CPAI (were more law-and-order oriented) than did their inhibitor counterparts (see Tables 2 and 3).

When the SRA achievement scores were compared, both male and female facilitators had significantly higher percentile ranks than inhibitors on the English, matehmatics and word usage subtests as well as the composite scores (see Tables 4 and 5).

## Discussion

Our finding that classroom inhibitors feel less responsible for what befalls them (have a more external locus of control) than do their facilitator peers is perhaps a common sense result. Since they have such an abysmal achievement record and seem frustrated at the lower levels of need, we may have uncovered just another case of learned helplessness resulting from a long history of academic (and perhaps other) failure.

Educators could make at least three types of responses to these problem students. Certainly a more concentrated and individualized approach to teaching could help the disruptive student become more academically successful. Reducing such school-related frustration might turn out to be the key to much of the problem.

If, as the data indicate, inhibitors are forced to take more responsibility for their own physiological needs, the schools might increase their cooperation with other social agencies to see if such burdens could be alleviated.

In addition, disruptive students might be assisted in attaining a more internal locus of control. Some system, such as Chapin and Dyck (1976)

propose, may help students believe that personal effort is related to academic success.

While not surprising, our finding that inhibitors are less committed to law and order is a bit frightening. If it turns out that prolonged academic failure produces inhibitors, and if inhibitors have a low commitment to law and order outside of school, public education may find itself at least partly responsible for the production of juvenile delinquency.

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Table 1

Analysis of Inhibitors and Facilitators
by Sex and Year in School

| Year in school | Inhibitors | | | Facilitators | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Sex | | | Sex | | |
| | F | M | Total | F | M | Total |
| Freshman | 5 | 8 | 13 | 13 | 10 | 23 |
| Sophomore | 5 | 14 | 19 | 9 | 10 | 19 |
| Junior | 5 | 15 | 20 | 10 | 16 | 26 |
| Senior | 10 | 7 | 17 | 13 | 11 | 24 |
| Total | 25 | 44 | 69 | 45 | 47 | 92 |

Table 2

Comparison of Mean Scores of Female Facilitators and Inhibitors

| | Inhibitors | | Facilitators | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scores | N | $\bar{x}$ | N | $\bar{x}$ | t | df | p |
| IAR + | 25 | 12.2 | 45 | 13.8 | 2.52 | 68 | >.01 |
| IAR - | 25 | 11.5 | 45 | 12.3 | 1.18 | 68 | NS |
| IAR T | 25 | 23.7 | 45 | 26.0 | 2.08 | 68 | >.025 |
| IE | 25 | 10.8 | 45 | 9.4 | 1.29 | 68 | NS |
| MI-SA | 24* | 2.8 | 45 | 5.1 | 2.53 | 67* | >.01 |
| MI-K | 24 | 3.9 | 45 | 5.9 | 2.75 | 67 | >.005 |
| MI-E | 24 | 6.5 | 45 | 6.8 | 0.29 | 67 | NS |
| MI-L | 24 | 10.2 | 45 | 6.4 | 4.80 | 67 | >.005 |
| MI-S | 24 | 2.5 | 45 | 6.7 | 1.99 | 67 | >.05 |
| MI-P | 24 | 8.6 | 45 | 4.9 | 3.32 | 67 | >.005 |
| CPAI | 25 | 36.7 | 45 | 41.5 | 2.10 | 68 | >.025 |

*Because a few scales were incorrectly marked, N and df may vary slightly.

Table 3

Comparison of Mean Scores of Male Facilitators and Inhibitors

| | Inhibitors | | Facilitators | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scores | N | $\bar{x}$ | N | $\bar{x}$ | t | df | p |
| IAR + | 44 | 11.9 | 47 | 13.3 | 2.49 | 89 | >.01 |
| IAR - | 44 | 10.9 | 47 | 12.1 | 2.09 | 89 | >.025 |
| IAR T | 44 | 22.8 | 47 | 25.4 | 2.86 | 89 | >.005 |
| IE | 44 | 10.7 | 47 | 9.1 | 2.07 | 89 | >.025 |
| MI-SA | 34* | 4.5 | 46* | 5.8 | 1.43 | 78* | NS |
| MI-K | 34 | 4.7 | 46 | 4.6 | 0.19 | 78 | NS |
| MI-E | 34 | 6.8 | 46 | 5.6 | 1.45 | 78 | NS |
| MI-L | 34 | 6.3 | 46 | 5.9 | 0.57 | 78 | NS |
| MI-S | 34 | 5.4 | 46 | 2.5 | 3.95 | 78 | >.005 |
| MI-P | 34 | 8.1 | 46 | 4.5 | 3.60 | 78 | >.005 |
| CPAI | 42 | 32.2 | 47 | 38.3 | 2.33 | 87 | >.025 |

*Because a few scales were incorrectly marked, N and df may vary slightly.

Table 4

Comparison of Mean Percentile Ranks of SRA Achievement Scores of Male Facilitators and Inhibitors*

| | Inhibitors | | Facilitators | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scores | N | $\bar{x}$ | N | $\bar{x}$ | t | df | p |
| SRA-E | 38 | 38.2 | 40 | 71.2 | 5.5 | 76 | <.01 |
| SRA-M | 38 | 44.5 | 40 | 77.8 | 5.8 | 76 | <.01 |
| SRA-WU | 38 | 45.4 | 40 | 77.8 | 5.8 | 76 | <.01 |
| SRA-COM | 38 | 43.3 | 40 | 78.9 | 6.1 | 76 | <.01 |

*Because test scores were not available for all students, the N's differ from other tables.

Table 5

Comparison of Mean Percentile Ranks of SRA Achievement Scores of Female Facilitators and Inhibitors*

| | Inhibitors | | Facilitators | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scores | N | $\bar{x}$ | N | $\bar{x}$ | t | df | p |
| SRA-E | 24 | 40.2 | 39 | 76.0 | 6.5 | 61 | <.01 |
| SRA-M | 24 | 42.4 | 39 | 73.8 | 6.6 | 61 | <.01 |
| SRA-WU | 24 | 48.8 | 39 | 77.5 | 6.0 | 61 | <.01 |
| SRA-COM | 24 | 41.3 | 39 | 80.2 | 9.0 | 61 | <.01 |

*Because test scores were not available for all students, the N's differ from other tables.